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BACKGAMMON

BY A. HOWARD CADY.

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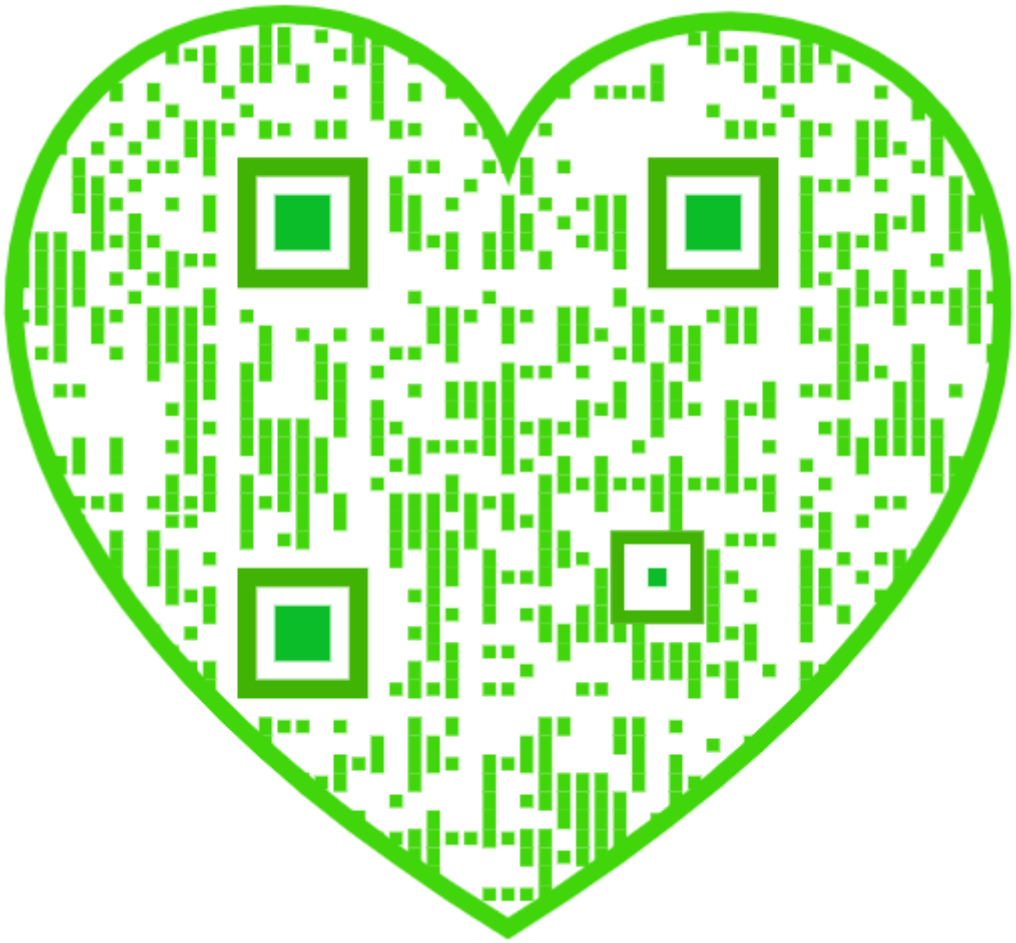

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Backgammon.

A GLANCE INTO THE EARLY HISTORY AND DESCRIPTIONS OF THE PASTIME, IN ITS VARIED AND PRIMITIVE FORMS, AND A TREATISE OF THE GAME AS IT IS PLAYED TO-DAY.

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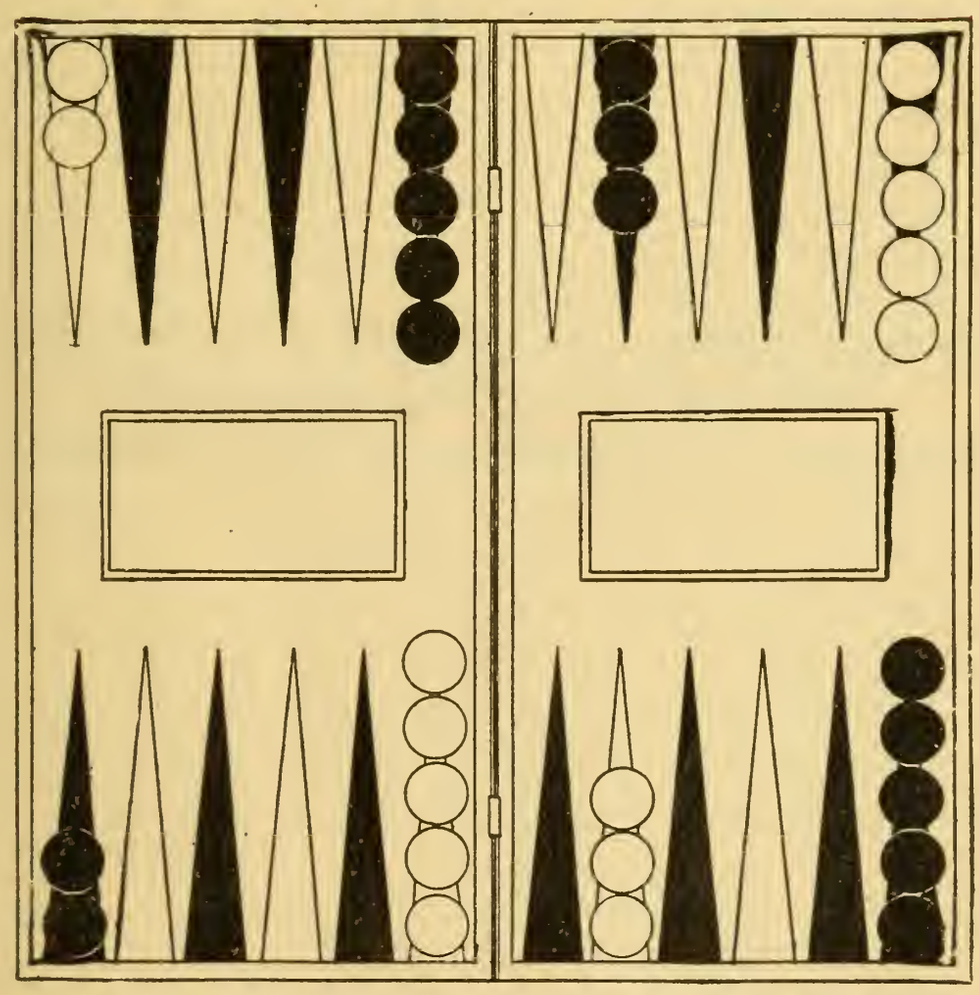
BY

A. HOWARD CADY.

BLACK.

Black's Inner Table. Black's Outer Table.



White's Inner Table. White's Outer Table.

WHITE.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

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PREFACE.

That "there is nothing new under the sun" is evidenced in innumerable ways, and seems to be a more and more generally-accepted fact, as each new epoch—I had almost said day—brings to our notice some time-worn subject decked out in fresh garb, but bearing, all the same, the mystical imprint of past ages.

The new dress is not put on with the intent, much less effort, to deceive us, but rather, let us assume, to revive our interest in what we have become wonted to regard as hackneyed and dull: hence, of no importance in this age of rushing progress.

Among the good old things which, according to tradition and history, have existed almost since the world began is back-gammon.

Of this famous pastime may be truly said:

> "Age cannot wither, nor custom stale
> Its infinite variety."

From the period of its invention, which many authors have tried to trace back to the dark ages, it has held sway over myriads of people of all nations and through different centuries, who have known it in its various and primitive stages, until this present day, when, also, it is very generally played by its modern votaries.

In this little volume it will be impossible to discourse at length upon the numerous phases of the game as it first came into existence, much less to explain just through what course of evolution it attained its present status, for that seems to be beyond human ken.

I shall try simply to give a brief synopsis of the origin and progressive stages of this very fascinating pastime in its primi-

tive state, which, I trust, will interest the reader sufficiently to arouse in him a desire for further investigation of the subject, and also give the necessary treatise on the modern game.

Backgammon is so essentially a household game that it needs neither introduction nor special recommendation, it seems to me, beyond the suggestion to those who do not already know it, to learn, and add it to their list of pleasant and instructive diversions without delay.

Special thanks are due Messrs. Lane, Tylor and Morgan, whose various works on backgammon among the Egyptians, Aztecs and Iroquois, have afforded me genuine pleasure in their perusal, and furnished data of intrinsic value, as also to the editor of the "Hand Book of Games," Messrs. Berkeley, Cavendish and others, whose admirable treatises and practical guides to the modern game have been of great assistance in this condensed compilation of instruction and information.

This game has ever been associated with the educated classes, differing in that degree from "whist," which had its day in the servants' hall, and was, at one period, tabooed in higher circles.

In this day of "leveling the masses," we may venture to think the game will appeal to all intelligent people, and, further, trust that no class distinction will interfere to prevent its becoming popular with the world at large, and, finally, that this little book will make its way into every house, and thus add one more to the attractions of home. A. H. C.

New York, Nov., 1895.

BACKGAMMON.

PART I.

IN ITS VARIED AND PRIMITIVE STAGES.

"Man's life's a game of *tables*, and he may
Mend his bad fortune by his wiser play."

Of the innummerable drawing-room games in vogue, perhaps none has a more mystifying, not to say bewildering, beginning than backgammon.

There are so many conflicting accounts regarding its origin, and the probable period, as well as place, of its invention, that, almost in despair of arriving at the real facts, one is tempted, at times, to give up the study, as each fresh research but leads deeper into the mazes of antiquity.

Among these various theories is one which presents itself as a plausible suggestion of the invention of the game. It is that draughts (or checkers) were originally counters, such as little stones, for instance, which were moved about on a calculation board to reckon up the throws, and that it was an afterthought to permit skill to take the place of moves.

Certain it is that the classic draughts were described always as a stone (*calx* or *calculus*).

In Germany to-day, though now made of wood, their original term *stein* (stone) is retained. The playing board, too, on which the stones were shifted, shares the name of calculating board—*abacus*.

There is a certain fascination about an investigation of this kind which increases with every new phase of the subject brought to one's notice. One is almost in danger of forgetting, or, at least, slighting the modern game, as the various char-

acteristics of the ancient or, more properly speaking, original pastime, in its primitive form, holds fast the interest and attention of the student.

Of course, with numerous other games of that period, the invention of backgammon has been ascribed to Palamedes, of Greece (about 1224, B. C.). There does not appear to be any special proof, however, that he had anything to do with its origin.

It is difficult to ascertain just what kind of backgammon the Greeks played in the earlier ages; but from different writings we gather that often, when they speak of *dice playing*, they do not mean simply hazard, but a species rather of the first-named game, where the throws of the dice are used to direct certain and skilful moves of the pieces.

The manner of playing the men in classic backgammon can be inferred from a Greek epigram of the fifth century, which commemorates a wonderful hit in which Emperor Zeno got his pieces so blocked that, having the bad fortune to throw 2, 5, 6 (at that period they used three dice, as, indeed, they continued to do also in England in the middle ages), the only move which remained open, forced him to leave eight blots.

In his "*Jeux des Anciens*," Becque de Fouquieres works out this historic problem, as also other matters of Greek and Latin backgammon, in a truly skilful manner.

Plato says: "As in casting dice, so ought we to arrange our affairs according to the throws we get, as reason shall declare best," while Plutarch, also moralizing on the subject, observes "that Plato compares life to *dicing*, where one must not only get good throws, but know how to use them skilfuly, when obtained."

Persian backgammon, which they called *Nard*, is said to bear a strong resemblance to the European form of the game, and there are those who claim even that it came from there in the first place.

This game is very popular through the East, and "Orthodox Moslems," we hear, "have seen in the fateful throws of the

dice a recognition of the decrees of Allah—that fall sometimes for a man and sometimes against him.'

Indeed, has it not been asserted by one that: "This is a nobler game than chess, for the backgammon player acknowledges predestination and the divine will, but the chess player denies them like a dissenter!"

In Rome, among the Christian antiquities, there is a marble slab, on which is cut a backgammon board, with a Greek cross in the middle, and in the Greek tongue an inscription to the effect "that Jesus Christ gives victory and help to dicers if they write his name when they throw the dice, Amen."

Although roughly traced, as if by the untutored hand of some stonecutter, it, nevertheless, shows that the board was similar to the one now used, even to the division in the centre, separating the two groups of six points on either side.

It is from Rome of ancient days, too, that we receive or, better speaking, inherit the custom of making the double board—the backgammon on one side and the draughtsboard on the other. At least, good authority informs us that it was thus the commentators interpreted Martial's epigram on the *tabula lusoria*. Here it is:

"Hic mihi seno numeratur tessera punto
Calculus hic gemino discolor hosti perit."

Here twice the dice is counted to the point,
Here 'twixt twin foes of other hue the draughtsman dies.

Certainly facts seem to point to the supposition that the game, as we know it by the English nomenclature of backgammon, and the more complicated French variation called Trictrac, comes from the Roman pastime of "twelve lines" (*duodecima scripta*), which was played throughout the empire, and of which Ovid said: "It has lines as many as the gliding year has months."

From Rome the game spread over Europe; its Latin name, *tabulæ*, easily transformed into English and French tables. Chaucer confirms this, when he tells us that the early name of

backgammon was tables, at which period it was played with three dice, and all the "men" began their action in the adversary's table. The title of "tables" dropped out of use in the Elizabethan era.

Just how it came by its present name is, and always will be, a disputed point. "La maison de Jeux Academiques" has abandoned the settlement of this question as a hopeless task, while De Henry tries to meet it by claiming its name as a Welsh compound—from *back* (little) and *cammon* (battle).

Strutt and Bishop Kennett on their sides, however, furnish deductions to seemingly prove its derivation from the Anglo-Saxon "bac" (back) and "gamone" a game—*i. e.*, "a game where players are expected to be sent back."

The backgammon games, of which there seem to be so many varieties, may, for convenience sake, be divided into two groups—lot backgammon and dice backgammon—one of which is played with two-faced lots, which can only fall in two ways—*i. e.*, "heads or tails," and the other with numbered dice.

It seems to be very generally assumed that lot backgammon came first, and was followed by dice backgammon, which is the European variety, and the one best known to-day.

In classic history, we find many plain indications of backgammon, and the ancient Greek pastime called *Kubeia*, or "dice-playing," is proven by numerous classical passages to have been of this same family.

In Palestine and Egypt a species of backgammon called *Tab* is played.

Writing of the "modern Egyptians," Edward W. Lane discusses at some length the various games played by them, and which he thinks especially suited to their "sedate dispositions."

He tells us, for instance, that they enjoy greatly *Satreng* (known to us by the more familiar name of chess), *dameh* (draughts), and *Tawŭlah* (backgammon or trictrac).

Tab, alluded to above, and which is the variety most extensively played among the lower orders in Egypt, may be classed under the head of lot backgammon. Incidentally, it may be

mentioned that this is known in other parts of the East as "*Tabwa-dukk*," an elaborate nomenclature which Mr. Lane says he never heard applied to it in Egypt.

For the *tab* variation of the game, four small pieces of stick, of a flat form about 8 inches in length and two-thirds of an inch in width, are first prepared. Usually, they are made of bits of palm branch, one side of which, cut flat and smooth, is white, the other green, or, when not fresh, yellow in tint; the first side is called white and the other black, by way of distinguishing them. They are called *tab*. The *seega*, upon which the game is played, is a board, divided into four rows of squares, called "*beyts*" or "*dars*;" each about 2 inches in width.

Sometimes the board, or *seega*, consists of similar rows of holes made in the ground, or on a flat stone. These beyts are generally 7, 9, 11, 13 or 15 in each row.

i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a
k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s
S	R	Q	P	O	N	M	L	K
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I

The above illustration shows a *seega* of nine *beyts* in each row, distinguishing the *beyts* by letters; one side the capital, and the other side, or opponent's, the small letters.

The arrangement of the pieces is described as follows: "In each *beyt* of one exterior row is usually placed a little piece of stone or of dingy brick about the size of a walnut, and in each *beyt* of the other exterior row a piece of red brick or tile, or sometimes pieces are placed only in a certain number of *beyts* in those rows, as, for instance, in the first four. The pieces of one row must be distinguished from those of the other.

These pieces are called "*kilah*" (dog); in the singular, *kelli*.

The throwing of lots (*tab*), of course, and not dice, regulates the moving of the men. They (the *tab*) are thrown against a stick set up in the ground, and the throw counted according to the number of *white* sides which come up. For example:

	0	1	2	3	4
White up . . .	None.	One.	Two.	Three.	Four.
	6	1	2	3	4
Count . .	(Go on.)	(Tab.)	(Stop.)	(Stop.)	(Go on.)

"There is evidently a crude attempt," says Mr. Taylor, "to reckon probabilities, giving a higher value to less frequent throws of all four whites and all four blacks than to two or three white, which come oftener. Beside the high count, they have the privilege of a second throw."

Incidentally, this latter fact is worthy of notice, as it would seem to indicate that if, as seems generally admitted, lot backgammon came first and was followed by dice backgammon, that the former has given to the latter the rule allowing doublets another throw.

The throw of one white, called *tab* (child)—*i. e.*, game, has a peculiar power, for by it only can a *kelb* (dog)—*i. e.*, stone or draught, be moved from its original position in the outer row and put at liberty to circulate in the beyts. The *kelbs*, before the removal from the original spot, are called *Nasara* (Christians); *Nasaranee*, singular; but after this, when, as one writer quaintly expresses it, they "go forth conquering and to conquer," they are called *Muslimeen* (Moslems.)

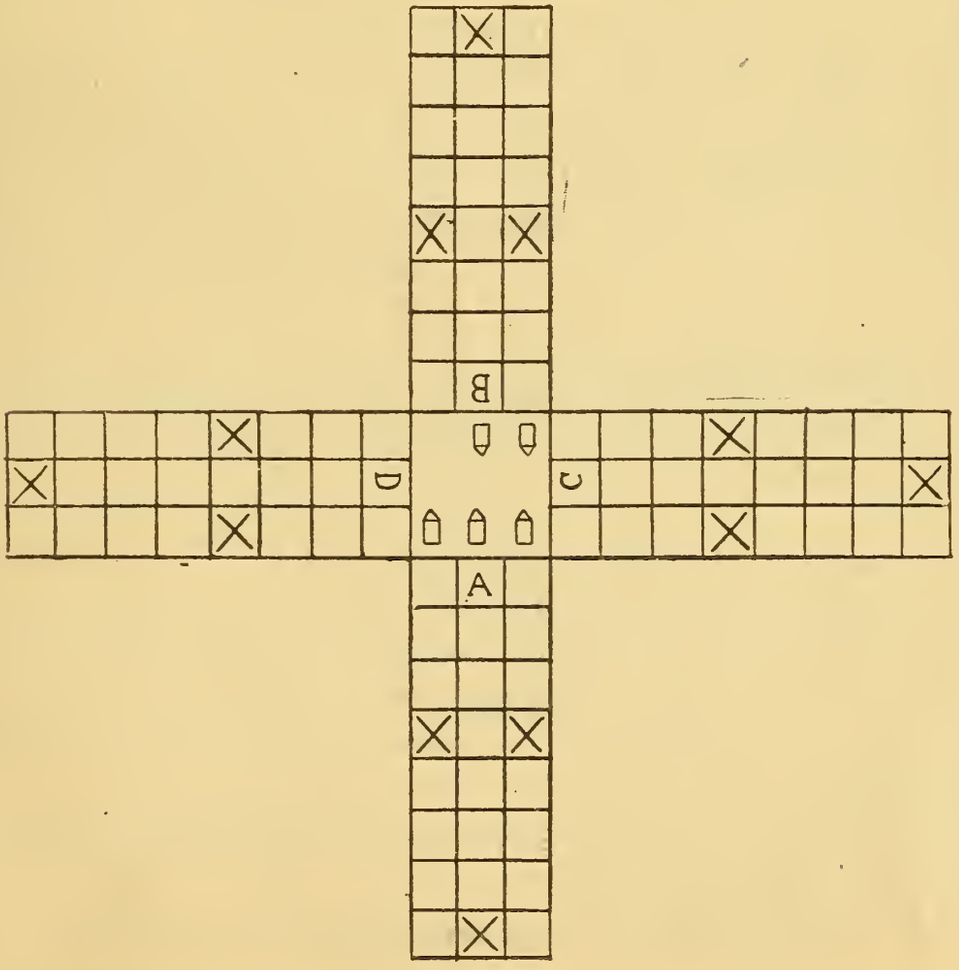
According to Dr. Birch, no Egyptian dice have been discovered earlier than the Roman era, nor any distinct allusion either to backgammon. Therefore this game cannot prove a claim to a place in the list of early Egyptian inventions; hence the nearest relation to *tab* is probably Chinese backgammon, though this latter is played with dice.

From Sanskrit literature we learn that games similar to backgammon were known in ancient India. Among them mention is made of *Panchiko*, played with cowrie shells, and in which

it appears the winning throws were when all mouths came up or down, as against the common throw, in which some fell each way. Another game on the same order was also known there which, according to the researches of Professor Weber, was called *Ayanaja* (luck or unluck). At least, that was the expression used in regard to the moving of the pieces which traveled right and left through the squares, taking an unprotected man from his place to begin his course anew.

To-day a species of backgammon known as *Pachisi* is extremely popular in India. It can be played by two, three or four persons, or by two pairs, the partners sitting opposite to each other.

A cloth, with colored diagram, is most generally used as the board, the zealous players, indeed, often carrying one rolled round their turbans.



As seen from foregoing diagram, each of these four arms has twenty-four squares, of which the three crosses on them are called *chik* (forts).

The pieces played with are generally of turned wood or ivory, resembling in shape the rifle bullet of the present day. They are in sets of four, each of the players having one, all of one color respectively, such as red, green, yellow or black.

The moves of the men are determined by the throw of the cowrie shells, which count according to the number that fall mouths upward.

The scoring resembles that of *tab*, and, when six cowries are used, counts as follows:

Mouths up . . .	None, one,	two, three, four,	five, six.
	6 10	2 3 4	25 12
Men round first . .	(Go on.)	(Stop.)	(Go on.)

Mr. Taylor states that, after careful research into the Sanscrit references and consultation with Professor Jolloy, of Wurzburg, he is inclined to think that the game *Panchika* already alluded to, and which is played with fine cowrie shells, represents one of the earliest forms of *Pachisi*, which signifies "five and twenty," derived, of course, from the fine cowries. Both, as played with cowries and dice, games of the *Pachisi* school are ancient in India.

A comparison of this Hindoo game of *Pachisi* displays close connection with Arab *Tab*. Still another game played in India, and, like *Pachisi*, is called *Chupua;* in this variation the cowries being superseded by a kind of oblong dice, numbered on the four sides, but not at the ends.

The Indian *Pachisi* board has been introduced into England, with four sets of four small draughts as the pieces and the ordinary dice. In this form it most closely resembles English backgammon.

From India to Madrid is a long journey, but in the tour of search an interesting one.

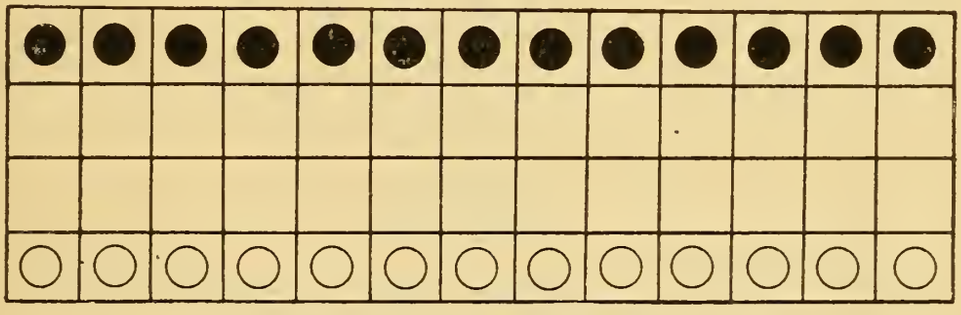
In his charming paper on backgammon among the Aztecs,

Mr. Taylor gives a very interesting account of the game in its primitive state in ancient Mexico, and from this we may venture to cull a few items.

Long before Hernando Cortis landed with his army of Spanish invaders at Vera Cruz, we are told, one variety of backgammon had already found its way from Asia into Mexico, and had become a very fashionable amusement at the babaric court of Matizuma.

Among the various accounts of this Mexican game, known there as *Patolli*, given by the Spanish chroniclers, the earliest may be found in Francisco Lopez de Gomara's work—"La istoria de las Indias y conquista de Mexico." As this was printed in 1552, it is easy to surmise that it must have been written while the conquest of 1551 was still fresh in his mind.

Gomara expresses himself thus: "Sometimes Montezuma looked on as they played Patolli, which much resembles the game of *tables*. It is played with beans, marked like one-face dice, which they call *Patolli*. They take them between the hands and throw on a mat or table, or on the ground, where there are certain lines like a merrel (or a draughts-board), on which they mark like stones the point which fell up, taking off and putting on a little stone.

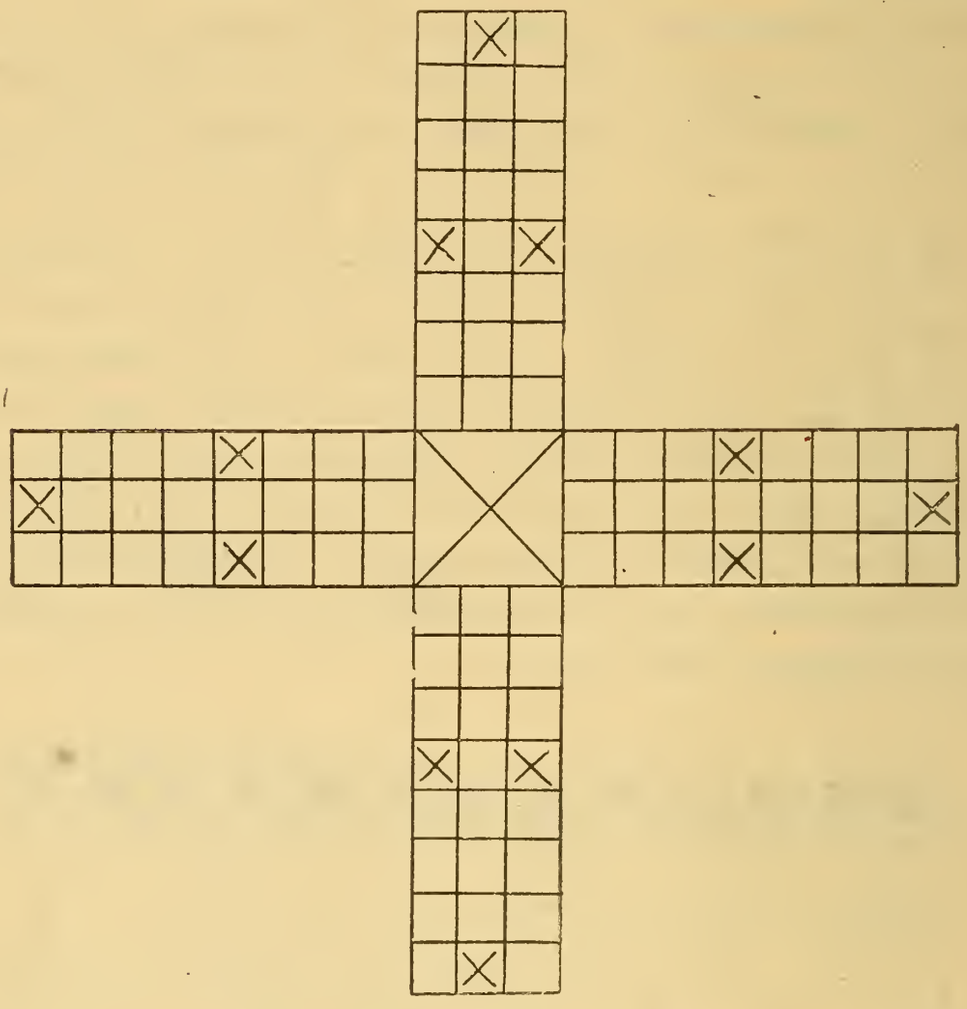


PATOLLI IN ANCIENT MEXICO.

In his "Monarchia Indiana" (1616) Juan de Torquemada, in part following this account, gives even more details, showing the diagram which he describes to have been of the shape of the *Pachisi* board, and the pieces of different colors.

He says of it: "They call it Patolli, because these dice are called so; they throw with both hands on a thin mat . . . on which are made certain lines after the maner of a cross, ┼ and others crossing them make the point falling up (as in dice), taking off or putting on little stones of different colors, as in the game of tables."

In his "Historia Universal de las cosas de Nuova Espana"



PATOLLI BOARD AS DESCRIBED BY TORQUEMADA, SAHAGAN AND OTHERS.

Fr. Bernadino de Sahagan gives also a quaint description of the game, explaining as well why it had ceased to be played some time after the conquest, as follows:

"The lords for this pleasure also played a game called *Patolli*, which is as the game of merello (or draughts), or the

like, or dice-playing, and there are four large beans, each having a hole, and they throw them with the hands, as one plays at knuckle bones, on a mat, where there is a figure drawn. At this game they used to play to win precious things, such as gold beads and precious stones, very fine turquoises. This game and that of ball they left off, being suspicious, on account of some idolatrous superstition in them." In another place, he further says: "The second pastime was a game like dice; they made on a mat a pointed cross, full of squares, like the game of draughts, and, sitting down on the mat, they took three large beans, with certain points made in them, and let fall on the pointed cross.

To those interested in further research of this pastime, delightful and, withal, exhaustive accounts, will be found in old tomes, among which are especially recommended: Dalgo Duran's "Hist Indias," Clavigero's "Storia Antica del Mexico" Brasseur de Bourbourg's "Histoire du Mexique et de l'Amerique Centrale," Father Joseph Ochs' "Nachrichten von Landern des Spanischen Amerika."

Summing up the descriptions of the various pastimes which are classified as species of the game, in its primitive form, it is evident that lot backgammon, as shown by *Tab*, *Pachisi* and kindred diversions, spread over the Old World from Egypt, across Southern Asia to Birma; and, as *Patolli* of the Mexicans is a variety of lot backgammon, most closely resembling *Pachisi*, and, possibly like this latter, passing into the variety known as dice backgammon, its existence would seem to prove that it had come across from Asia in the first place. Therefore it can be numbered among the elements of Asiatic culture, which are easily traceable in ancient Mexican civilization. This, with the development in metal work, architecture, astronomy, as well as political and religious institutions, seem all to point to Asiatic influence.

From Patolli, or Patole, as the Egytians called it, we turn instinctively to the Indian variety of the game, which may be classified as another primitive form of backgammon with

which Mr L. H. Morgan, in his "League of the Iroquois" and other writers have made us so familiar.

Of the pastimes which may be considered one of the national games of the Iroquois race there appear to be two varieties: *Gus-ga-e-sa-ta*, or deer buttons, and *Gus-ka-eh*, played with a bowl and peach stones.

The former was strictly a fireside game, while the latter was played in the public council house by a succession of players, two at a time, and under the supervision of managers appointed to represent the contending parties and watch the contest.

Gus-ga-e-sa-ta may be briefly described as being played with eight buttons, about an inch in diameter each, made of elk horn, and shaped like a double convex lens. They were rounded and polished, and, furthermore, slightly burned on one side to blacken them. A certain number of beans, fifty perhaps, were made the capital, and the game continued until one of the players had won them all. All the players remained in their seats until it was determined.

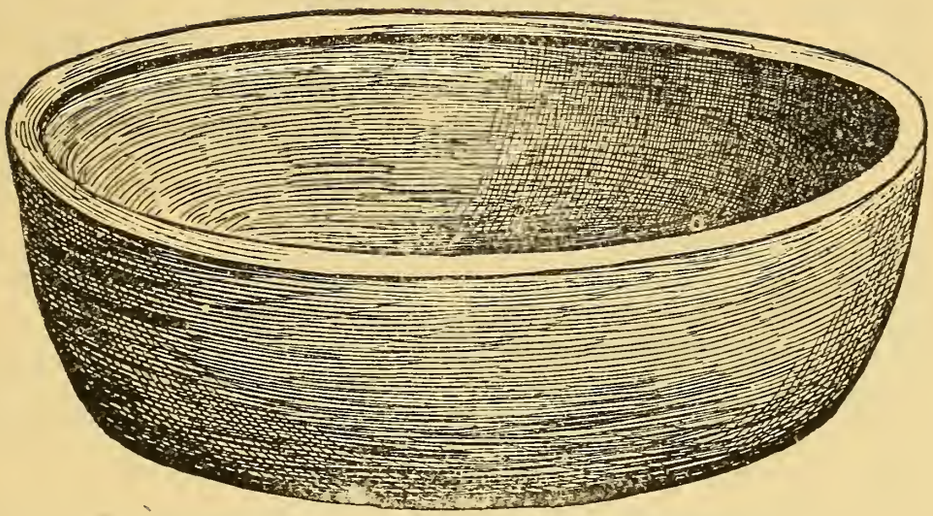
The introduction of *Gus-ka-eh* among the Iroquois is ascribed to the *Ta-do-da-ho*, who flourished at the time of the formation of the League; and, we are told, a popular belief prevailed that the game would be enjoyed by them in a future life, "in the realm of the Great Spirit."

It was with them essentially a betting game, in which the players were divided by tribes.

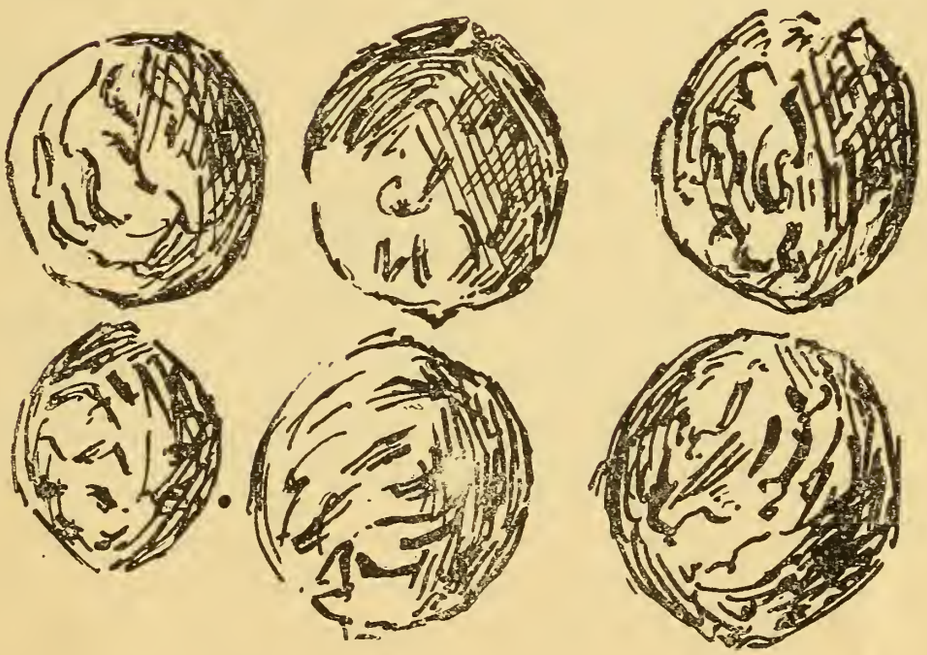
Through established custom of long standing, it was introduced always as the final exercises on the celebration of the *Green Corn*, the *Harvest* festivities and the New Year's jubilee.

The implements of the game are described as follows: A dish about a foot in diameter at the base and carved out of a knot of wood or made of earth. The peach stones were then ground or cut down into an oval form, reducing them in the process about half in size, after which the heart of the pit was removed and the stones themselves burned on one side to blacken then.

The accompanying illustration shows the bowl and peach



GA-JIH, OR BOWL.



GUS-KA-EH

stones, the latter in various positions, thus displaying the degrees of their convexity.

A platform erected a few feet from the ground was covered with blankets. After the betting was closed—that sounds quite modern!—and the articles had been given into the custody of the managers, they seated themselves on this platform, surrounded by a crowd of spectators, while the players, two in number, sat down to the game between the two divisions into which they arranged themselves.

The game was extremely simple, depending on the dexterity of the player in a measure, though really more on luck.

The blackened peach stones were shaken in the bowl by the player, the count depending upon the number which came up of one color after they had ceased rolling in the dish.

The length of the game depended, to a certain extent, upon the number of beans which made the bank—as a rule, this was 100—the victory being gained by the side which, in the end, won them all. According to the laws of the game, each player was permitted to retain his seat until he had lost his outfit—*i. e.*, the number of beans, usually five, which were given to each to begin with, after which he was obliged to surrender it to another player on his side, and chosen by the managers of his party.

Thus the game proceeded, sometimes even, when begun about the meridian, taking another day to finish.

"It was necessarily a long game by its constitution," Mr. Morgan explains, "as it was so carefully guarded against the extreme fickleness of most games of chance."

It is not necessary to enter into the details of the mode of playing it, or the peculiarities and varieties of this pastime, which bears certain and marked characteristics suggestive of the modern and developed game of backgammon to which we may now turn.

PART II.

DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS HOW TO PLAY IT.

Of the recognized varieties of the game which prevail to-day, three exist of a most interesting character, all of which, of course, are played with dice and are called respectively, English, Russian or *Tric Trac* and Turkish Backgammon.

ENGLISH BACKGAMMON.

To those unfamiliar with the game, a description of the implements used therein is, perhaps, the first essential, as to thoroughly understand it one must know what these are.

THE IMPLEMENTS.

The backgammon table is, as is very generally known, the interior of the draughts (or checker) board. In form it is square, usually made of leather, the borders of the same slightly raised, and which, in fact, make the sides to the box holding the draughts, while through the middle, where it is divided, is a raised *bar* separating it into two tables, known as the *inner* (or *home*) and outer tables.

These are marked with twenty-four points or fleches, colored alternately black or white—or, as in the modern backgammon board, red and black—six points in each section. The points are sufficient in length to hold five pieces—or "men"—each, the last one covering the end of the same.

These points are named as follows: That to extreme left in white's inner (or home) table, is called white's ace point; the next, white's deuce point, and the others in turn *trois, quatre, cinque* and *six* points.

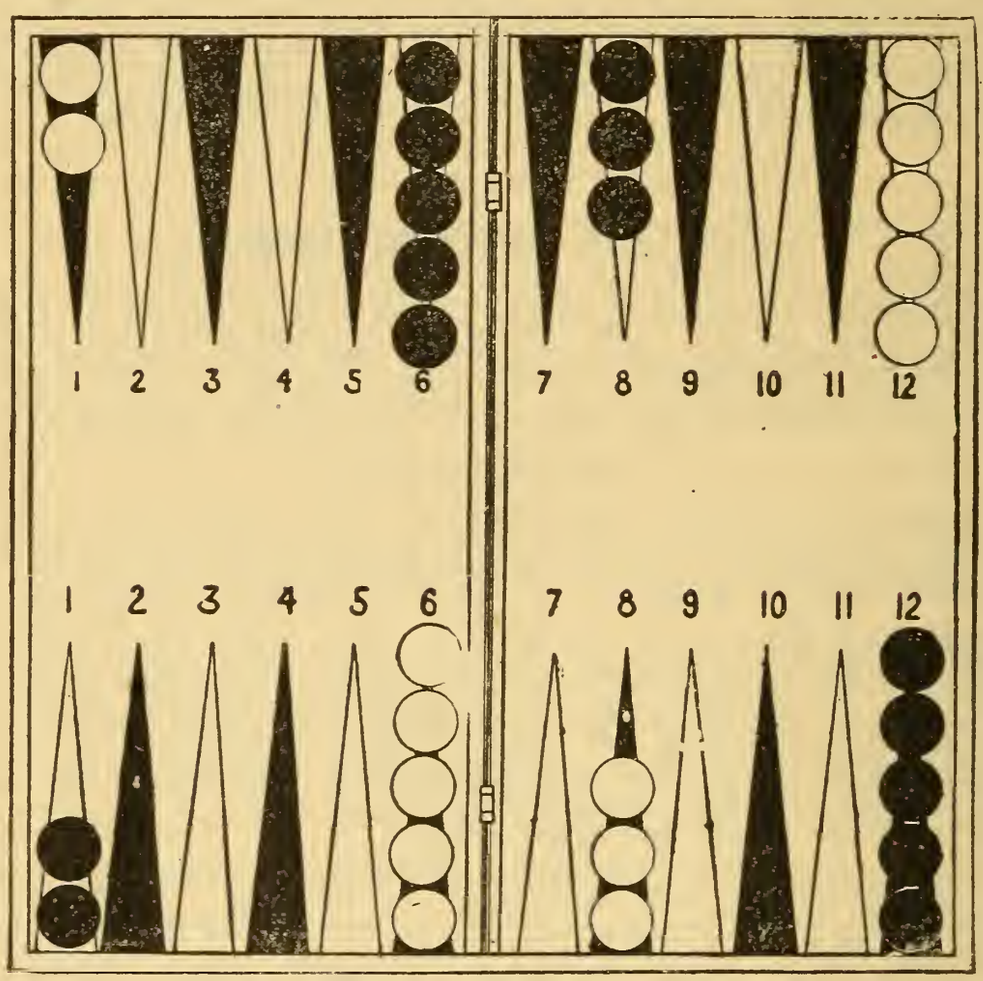
The ace point in white's outer table (No. 7), is called his *bar* point, and the remaining five, *deuce*, *trois quatre*, *cinque* and *six*, in their respective order.

The points in the opposite tables are named in the same way for black.

The pieces or "men" are the same as those used for draughts, save, that instead of twelve, fifteen of each color are required.

BLACK.

Black's Home, or Inner Table. Black's Outer Table.



Red's Home, or Inner Table. Red's Outer Table.

RED.

It is customary to play toward the light; that is, make the home (or inner) table the one nearest the window or lamp, as the hour of the day demands.

The pieces can be reversed, making the outer table the inner

table or *vice versa*, as the light may require, although, really, this is not compulsory.

There are two *dice boxes*, one for each player. They are cylindrical in form, and closed at one end, and, as a rule, slightly pressed in at the centre. In size, they are about four inches long, and one and three-quarter inches across at the broadest part. Usually, they, like the board, are of leather. The interior of these little cylinders is grooved with concentric circles.

There are two dice only—called a *pair*—which are used by both players in turn. They are made of ivory and marked with a number on each face, from one to six, and so placed that the dots on the opposite sides, when added together, make seven.

The numbers are named in this wise: Ace, Deuce, Trois, or Trey (doublets, Treys), Quatre, Cinque, and Six, or size (doublets, sizes).

THE TECHNICAL TERMS.

Bar—The line which divides the box.

Bar-point—The point next the bar.

Blot—A single piece—or "man"—on a point.

Backgammon—Winning the entire game.

Bearing the Men—Taking them off the table.

Doublets—Two dice with the same number of dots, as two aces, two deuces, etc.

Gammon—Two points won out of the three which constitute the game.

Getting Home—Bringing one's men from the adversary's tables into one's own.

Hit—To remove all of one's men before the opponent has done so.

Home—The inner table.

Making Points—Winning hits.

Men—The pieces; *i. e.*, checkers or draughts used in the game.

To Enter—To replace a piece in the table after it has been excluded through a point (or fleche) being already full.

THE GAME.

The game is played by two persons, occupying opposite positions to one another at the board.

If the home tables are to be on the left, the pieces will be played as follows: White will place two men on the opponent's ace point, five on his twelfth (or No. 6 outer table), three upon his own eighth, and five upon his sixth point.

Black's pieces will be played in corresponding order directly opposite.

The position of the pieces upon the board at the beginning of the game is shown in Diagram No. I. on page 13.

THROWING.

Each player then takes a dice box, shaking one die in it, with two of his fingers placed across the opening to prevent the die falling out. The shaking is followed naturally by the die being thrown (cast) somewhere in the centre of the board between the two rows of points. The player who has thrown the higher number has the first play, it being optional with him to adopt the numbers already thrown or taking up the pair of dice and casting again.

PLAYING.

A player in throwing the dice should always call out the numbers shown on the faces of the same. For instance, if he throws a five, two, he says "Cinque, deuce"; or four, three, "Quatre, trey," etc., etc., the higher number being named first.

This step made, the game is begun by his moving any one of his men to an unoccupied point, technically known as "open" point, according to the distance indicated by one of the dice, and another man to some other point, as shown by the number on the second die. If he prefers—this is also optional—he can move the first man still further on, as directed by number on second die, rather than touch another one. This completes the move.

The game thus started proceeds in the usual manner, the players throwing and moving alternately.

The object of the game is for the player to move the men from point to point, as the successive numbers on the dice thrown indicate, and from the opponent's home (or inner table) into his outer table, thence into his own outer table, and, finally, over the bar into his own home (or inner table).

This is technically known as "carrying the men."

It is understood, of course, that both the white and the black pieces are moved in the same way—only in opposite directions.

As previously stated, one piece can be played the whole throw—*i. e.*, the number on both of the dice, or one man, one of the numbers thrown, and the other man, that on the second die. For example: White may move quatre deuce by carrying one man from the sixth point in black's outer table to his own bar point (No. I of his outer table), or, again, he can play (or move) a man from the deuce point of his outer table to his quatre point, and the second from his six to his quatre point.

When the men are played after the latter method, so as to occupy a previously blank point, with two men, it is termed *making a point.*

Should white, on the contrary, play any other of his men in the same manner, as, for instance, one from his outer table to his six point, and any other, four points, the latter will remain on a point by himself, and this is termed *leaving a blot.*

If two similar numbers are on the face of the dice, they are called "doublets," and the player is entitled to double what he throws. Example: Aces, four points, instead of two, and so on for all the other doublets. Berkeley gives the following clear and interesting illustration, which covers, of course, the highest throw:

"Double sixes entitles the player to 24 points, and may be played in any of the following ways: (a), one man, 24 points; (b), one man, 18 points, and the other 6 points; (c), one man, 12 points each; (e), four men, 6 points each, provided he does not go beyond his ace point, nor play on any point occupied by his adversary, *i. e.*, a point on which there are two or more men belonging to his adversary."

If, however, all the points shown by the throw of the dice are already covered by the opponent's men, the moves are lost. Example: If trey doublets are thrown, and the first third point from all the player's men is occupied by two or more of the opponent's men, the play is lost, although the six, ninth, and twelfth points are uncovered.

While the first player (whom we will call white by way of distinguishing the sides) is moving, the adversary (black) may put the dice in his box and shake them, that thus, when the first named player has finished his play—or moves—the latter may throw, call his throw and play it.

THE RESTRICTIONS IN PLAYING.

The only restrictions in playing are: The player cannot play (1) beyond his own home table, nor (2) on any point already in possession of his adversary, *i.e.*, occupied by two or more of the latter's men.

For instance, if he throws six ace, he cannot play a six from his six point, or an ace from his opponent's twelfth point. He can, however, play a seven to his six point from the opponent's twelfth, because his bar is open, although his twelfth is in possession of the opponent.

Any part of a throw which cannot be played is lost; but the player *must* play the entire throw when he can. For example: A player throws trois ace, and the men are so placed that he can play either trois or ace points, but not both, therefore he must decide which seems preferable and move accordingly; but if, by playing the ace first, he can play the trey afterward, he must do so.

HITTING A BLOT.

When, as will happen during the progress of a game, one man alone is left on a point it is called a *blot*, and is thus exposed to the hit of the adversary, who endeavors as a rule to do this by leading one of his own men to that point. The man hit is removed immediately and placed on the bar (the division between the boards), and the player to whom it belongs

cannot play again until the man is entered. This is accomplished by the throw of a number which enables him to enter the blot on an unoccupied point in the opponent's home table and playing it from a point of the board adjoining the opponent's ace point.

Naturally, the man cannot be entered on any point already in possession of the opponent. For instance, if the points answering to the two numbers thrown are occupied, or if doublets are thrown, and the corresponding point is occupied, of course the player who has a man "up" cannot enter him.

As the game draws to an end, and most of the points in the adversary's home (or inner) table are *covered* — that is, contain two or more men—it grows difficult to enter; but the player has no option in the matter; he must simply wait until the right number comes up, or until other points are exposed by the opponent having played some of his men up or borne them off the table.*

Two or more blots can be taken up at the same time, or in successive throws. "Hitting a blot" often lends zest as well as variety to the game.

It is never compulsory to hit a blot if the throw can be played without touching the point on which it rests. Example: A player throws quatre deuce, and wishes to play (move) a piece two points distant from the blot. If he is able to play the quatre first and the deuce afterwards he is not obliged to take up the blot.

BEARING.

The game proceeds as already described until one of the players has carried all his men into his home (or inner) table. Directly this is done, he has the privilege of taking his men off the board, technically called *bearing*.

For every number thrown a man is removed from the corresponding point, or, if the player prefers, it may be played up;

* N. B.—When all six points are blocked, it is useless for the player to throw, and his adversary, therefore, may continue to play until he opens a point in his home table.

if, however, it is impossible to play up a man, it must be "borne."

Suppose his home table to be made up, and he throws cinque deuce, he bears one man from his cinque and one from his deuce point; or, he may, if he prefers it, play a cinque from his six-point and a deuce from his six, cinque, quatre or trey point; or, again, he can play one and bear the other. If he cannot play any part of the throw he must bear it—for instance, if he has no man on his six or cinque points, he must bear the quatre.

If a number is thrown which is higher than any point on which there is a man, then the player must bear a man from the highest point occupied. Example: If a six is thrown and there is no man on the six point, the player must bear from his cinque point, or, if that, too, is unoccupied, from his quatre point, or, again, if that also is empty (unoccupied), from his trois point, and so on.

If the player throws cinque ace, and has no man on his cinque, he can, if he wishes, play up an ace from his cinque point and bear the cinque from his quatre point. If, on the contrary, the player throws an ace, and his ace point is unoccupied, he may play up the ace.

Here, as in the earlier stage of the game, doublets entitle the player to play up, or bear, four men.

If, after the player has begun bearing his men, he hits a blot he must enter on his adversary's inner table, and he cannot bear any more men until this one taken up has been carried into his own inner table.

In bearing, should the opponent be waiting to enter any of his men which have been hit, care should be taken to leave no blot or unprotected point.

The player who first bears all his men wins a hit, or single game, provided, of course, that the adversary has borne off any of his men.

It is a *gammon*, or double game, when the player has borne all his men before his adversary has borne any. It is a triple

or quadruple game (according to previous arrangement or agreement between the players), or *backgammon*, when the winner bears his last man before the adversary, not having borne any men, has carried all his men out of the winner's tables.

Should a player, having borne a man, be taken up, he can only lose a hit, even if he fails to enter the man before the adversary bears all his.

When a number of games are being played the winner of a hit has the right to the first throw in the new game ; but if a gammon or backgammon is won, then the right to first play in the succeeding game is decided by the throwing each of a single die, etc., as already described.

TACTICS AND GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS.

I. At the beginning of a game at backgammon the player's chief object should be, first, to secure his own or his adversary's cinque point, or even both ; second, when these points are secured, to play a pushing game, and try to gammon the opponent.

II. The next best point, after the cinque point in the home table is secured, is the bar-point, thereby preventing the adversary from running away if he throws double-sixes.

III. When the player has secured these, he should prefer to make a quatre point in his own inner table, rather than quatre point out of them.

IV. Having gained this point, there is a good chance of gammoning the adversary, more especially if he is very forward. To accomplish this, however, it will be necessary to vary the game, according to circumstances. Suppose the opponent's inner table is very ragged; it will be to the interest of the player to open his bar-point in the hope of compelling the adversary to run out of this inner table with a six, and leave two blots. Then, if his men are properly spread ; *i.e.*, not crowded on any one or more points, he cannot only catch the man (or piece) the adversary brings out, but also have a

good chance of taking up the men left behind. But if the adversary has a blot in his inner table, it will then be advisable not to make up his own table, etc., but have a blot in it ; and if taken up himself, he will have the probability of getting a third man, which will return a gammon quite probable.

V. If not anxious to win more than a hit, the player should endeavor to gain his own or the adversary's cinque point ; and if he fail in this, through being hit by the opponent, who is also more forward than himself, he must play a bold game. Thus, place a man on his cinque or bar-point, and if the adversary fails to hit it, then cover ; *i. e.*, place another piece on the one already there, the blot, himself, and play a forward game instead of a back one.

If, on the contrary, the blot is taken up, a back game must be resorted to, and the greater number of blots offered and taken up, the better.

It should be the endeavor of the player in this event to gain or hold his opponent's ace and deuce points, or ace and trois points, and if possible to keep three men on his ace point, so that if he hit a blot from there he still has the ace point guarded.

The best play for every possible throw at the beginning of the game, as given by Hoyle, confirmed by Cavendish and others, is as follows :

TABLE No. I.

1. Two aces are to be played on the cinque point and bar point for a gammon or for a hit.

2. Two sixes to be played on the adversary's bar point and on the thrower's bar point for a gammon or for a hit.

3. Two trois to be played on the cinque point, and the other two on the trois point in his own tables, for a gammon only.

4. Two deuces to be played on the quatre point, in his own tables, and two to be brought over from the five men placed in the adversary's tables, for a gammon only.

5. Two quatre to be brought over from the five men placed

in the adversary's tables, and to be put on the cinque point in his own tables for a gammon only.

6. Two cinque to be brought over from the five men placed in the adversary's tables, and to be put on the trois point in his own tables, for a gammon or for a hit.

7. Six ace, he must take his bar-point for a gammon or for a hit.

8. Six deuce, a man to be brought from the five men placed in the adversary's tables, and to be placed in the cinque point in his own tables, for a gammon or for a hit.

9. Six and trois, a man to be brought from the adversary's ace point, as far as he will go, for a gammon or for a hit.

10. Six and quatre, a man to be brought from the adversary's ace point, as far as he will go, for a gammon or for a hit.

11. Six and cinque, a man to be carried from the adversary's ace point, as far as he can go, for a gammon or a hit.

12. Cinque and quatre, a man to be carried from the adversary's ace point, as far as he can go, for a gammon or for a hit.

13. Cinque trois, to make the trois point in his table, for a gammon or for a hit.

14. Cinque deuce, to play two men from the five placed in the adversary's tables, for a gammon or for a hit.

15. Cinque ace, to bring one man from the five placed in the adversary's tables for the cinque, and to play one man down on the cinque point in his own tables for the ace, for a gammon only.

16. Quatre trois, two men to be brought from the five placed in the adversary's tables, for a gammon or for a hit.

17. Quatre deuce, to make the quatre point in his own tables, for a gammon or for a hit.

18. Quatre ace, to play a man from the five placed in the adversary's tables, for the quatre ; and for the ace, to play a man down upon the cinque point in his own tables, for a gammon only.

19. Trois deuce, two men to be brought from the five placed in the adversary's tables, for a gammon only.

20. Trois ace, to make the cinque point in his own tables, for a gammon or for a hit.

21. Deuce ace, to play one man from the five men placed in the adversary's table, for the deuce ; and for the ace, to play a man down upon the cinque point in his own tables.

22. Deuce trois, two of them to be played on the cinque point in his own tables, and with the other two he is to take the quatre point in the adversary's tables.

23. Two deuces, two of them are to be played on the quatre point in his own tables, and with the other two he has to take the trois point in the adversary's tables. By playing these two cases in this manner, the player avoids being shut up in the adversary's tables, and has the chance of throwing out the tables to win the hit.

24. Two quatre, two of them are to take the adversary's cinque point in the adversary's tables, and for the other two, two men are to be brought from the five placed in the adversary's tables.

25. Cinque ace, the cinque should be played from the five men placed in the adversary's tables, and the ace from the adversary's ace point.

26. Quatre ace, the quatre to be played from the five men placed in the adversary's ace point.

27. Deuce ace, the deuce to be played from the five men placed in the adversary's table, and the ace from the adversary's ace point.

The last three chances are played in this manner because, an ace being laid down in the adversary's tables, there is a probability of throwing deuce ace, trois deuce, quatre trois, or six cinque, in two or three throws, either of which throws secures a point and gives the player the best of the hit.

VI. If it seems inadvisable to spread his pieces, the player should try to escape with one or other of his distant men.

VII. When compelled to leave a blot, the player should do do so where there is the least chance of its being taken by the adversary.

The following table, arranged by Berkeley, it will be seen differs somewhat from that of Hoyle, with which the majority

of players are familiar. He draws special notice to the error in Hoyle's famous table, as also attention to the fact that he has added "the last five long ranges," etc.:

TABLE No. II.

Giving the odds against being taken up, or hit on any number within the reach of single or double dice.

Extra Odds.	Approximate Odds.		Range.
It is 25 to 11	Over 2 to 1	Against being hit on a	One.
24 to 12	2 to 1	" " "	Two.
22 to 14	About 3 to 2	" " "	Three.
21 to 15	" 4 to 3	" " "	Four.
21 to 15	" 4 to 3	" " "	Five.
19 to 17	" even.	" " "	Six.
30 to 6	5 to 1	" " "	Seven.
30 to 6	5 to 1	" " "	Eight.
31 to 5	About 6 to 1	" " "	Nine.
33 to 3	11 to 1	" " "	Ten.
34 to 2	17 to 1	" " "	Eleven.
33 to 3	11 to 1	" " "	Twelve.
35 to 1	35 to 1	" " "	Fifteen.
35 to 1	35 to 1	" " "	Sixteen.
35 to 1	35 to 1	" " "	Eighteen.
35 to 1	35 to 1	" " "	Twenty.
35 to 1	35 to 1	" " "	Twenty-four.

VIII. The player must guard against crowding his game at any time; *i. e.*, getting four or five men on any point, but more particularly is that to be avoided on the deuce and trois points in his home table.

IX. In entering a man which it is the adversary's advantage to hit, the player must have the blot on the lowest point he can; for instance, ace point in preference to deuce point, and so on, for if the adversary hits him it will crowd the former's game, compelling him to play on his low points. N. B.—The player must avoid carrying many men on the low points in his own table, as these men are out of play, and the board is thus left open to the adversary.

X. It is often good play to take up a blot of an opponent and leave one of one's own in its place, if he cannot hit it in return, save with double dice—*i. e.*, by throwing a number over six, as the chances are 5 to 1 against his doing so. When playing only for a hit, and two of the adversary's men are already up, this should be avoided, as it is always a risk.

XI. At the beginning of a game or rubber, the player should not play for a "back game"—*i. e.*, exposing of blots unnecessarily and otherwise waiting for the adversary to make blots, for by this method a great risk is run in the chance of losing a gammon in trying to win a hit.

XII. There are two chief reasons for playing a back game: (1) If the adversary has been throwing very high, hence is as forward that the other player has no chance of winning a hit unless he can obtain a good home table and hit a blot of the opponent, then the wisest policy seems to be to leave blots for him to take up, and to keep his two men in the adversary's table as long as he can. (2) If the player is so hemmed in the adversary's table that escape seems hopeless, then, in such a position, he should at once leave blots, as four men securing two separate points in the adversary's table, particularly should they happen to be his quatre and deuce points.

From these hints on back play two obvious conclusions may be drawn: First, it is best to block the antagonist without delay, and thus force him to play a back game, thus to risk a gammon or gain a hit; second, a player should never take up, unless obliged to, blots purposely left by a skilful antagonist, since, if it is good play to leave blots, it cannot be to his advantage to take them up.

XIII. In carrying men home, the player should carry the most distant man to the adversary's bar point, next to the six point in his own outer table, and, finally, to his own six point in his inner table.

By following this rule as far as the throws admit, it will be seen that the men will be carried home in the fewest possible number of throws.

XIV. When one player is bearing his men, and the other has two men on a low point in the first one's table and several in the outer table, it is well to leave a blot there, thus preventing him from bearing his men to the greatest advantage, and also gives the second player a chance of hitting him if he leaves a blot. If, however, on calculation, the second player finds

that he can probably save the gammon by bringing both of his men out of the adversary's table, he should wait for a blot.

XV. When a set, *i. e.*, three games up of the best of five, is played at backgammon, the odds, according to Berkeley, are as follows :

When A has won 1 game, B none, it is 3 to 2 on A.

When A has won 2 games, B none, it is 3 to 1 on A.

When A has won 2 games and B 1, it is 2 to 1 on A.

Backgammon offers so many problems regarding the manner of meeting its varied throws and intricate calculations, that one might continue indefinitely to make suggestions and descant on its probabilities, but the foregoing hints will, let us hope, meet the general requirements of the game. Practice only can make the player thoroughly conversant with its methods. In the following

CALCULATION OF CHANCES,

as given by Hoyle in the first place, and generally adopted by the writers of this day, valuable information will be found :

On the two dice there are thirty-six chances. In these thirty-six chances the points are :

	Points.
2 Aces	4
2 Deuces	8
2 Trois	12
2 Fours	16
2 Fives	20
2 Sixes	25
6 and 5 twice	22
6 and 4 twice	20
6 and 3 twice	18
6 and 2 twice	16
6 and 1 twice	14
5 and 4 twice	18
5 and 3 twice	16
5 and 2 twice	14
5 and 1 twice	12
4 and 3 twice	14
4 and 2 twice	12
4 and 1 twice	10
3 and 2 twice	10
3 and 1 twice	8
2 and 1 twice	6

divided by 36)294(8
288

6

Thus we see that 294 divided by 36 gives 8 and a little more as the average throw with two dice.

The chances upon two dice are calculated as follows :

2 Sixes	1
2 Fives	1
2 Fours	1
2 Trois	1
2 Deuces	1
*2 Aces	1
6 and 5 twice	2
6 and 4 twice	2
6 and 3 twice	2
6 and 2 twice	2
*6 and 1 twice	2
5 and 4 twice	2
5 and 3 twice	2
5 and 2 twice	2
*5 and 1 twice	2
4 and 3 twice	2
4 and 2 twice	2
*4 and 1 twice	2
3 and 2 twice	2
*3 and 1 twice	2
*2 and 1 twice	2
	36

In order to find out by this table of thirty-six chances what are the odds of being hit upon a certain or flat die, the player must consult the following table where marked with an asterisk:

*2 Aces	1
*6 and 1 twice	2
*5 and 1 twice	2
*4 and 1 twice	2
*3 and 1 twice	2
*2 and 1 twice	2
Total	11
Which deducted from	36
The remainder is	25

By this calculation it appears it is twenty-five to eleven against hitting an ace upon a certain or flat die.

This method holds good with respect to any other flat die as with the ace. For instance, What are the odds of entering a man upon the points 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 ?

To enter it upon		For.		Against.			For.		Against.
1	point is	11	to	25,	or about		4	to	9
2	"	20	"	16	"		5	"	4
3	"	27	"	9	"		3	"	1
4	"	32	"	4	"		8	"	1
5	"	35	"	1	"		35	"	1

The following table shows the odds of hitting with any chance in the form of a single die :

To enter it upon		For.		Against.			For.		Against.
1	is	11	to	25,	or about		4	to	9
2	"	12	"	24	"		1	"	2
3	"	14	"	22	"		2	"	3
4	"	15	"	21	"		5	"	7
5	"	15	"	21	"		5	"	7
6	"	17	"	19	"		8½	"	9½

The following table shows the odds of hitting with double dice :

To hit upon		For.		Against.			For.		Against.
7	is	6	to	30,	or about		1	to	5
8	"	6	"	30	"		1	"	5
9	"	5	"	31	"		1	"	6
10	"	3	"	33	"		1	"	11
11	"	2	"	34	"		1	"	17
12	"	1	"	36	"		1	"	36

The following table is given in order to show the odds of hitting upon a six in a table of thirty-six chances :

	Points.
2 Sixes	1
2 Trois	1
2 Deuces	1
6 and 5 twice	2
6 and 4 twice	2
6 and 3 twice	2
6 and 2 twice	2
6 and 1 twice	2
5 and 1 twice	2
4 and 2 twice	2
	17

Deduct this 17 from 36, the number of chances upon two dice, and we have 19. From this table, then, we find that it is 19 to 17 against being hit upon a six.

The odds of 2 love is about 5 to 2.
" " " 2 to 1 " " 2 " 1.
" " " 1 love " " 3 " 2.

LAWS OF BACKGAMMON.

FURNISHING THE BOARD.

1. If a player places his men wrongly, the adversary, before he throws a die, may require the board to be properly furnished.

2. If a player does not place all his men before he throws a die, he cannot place those he has omitted.*

THROWING.

3. The dice must be thrown in one of the tables. If a die jumps from one table to the other, or off the board, or on to the bar or frame, the throw is null and void, and the caster throws again.

4. If one die rests on top of the other, or tilts against the other, or against a man, or against the bar or frame, the throw is null and void, and the caster throws again.

5. If a die is touched while rolling or spinning on the board, the player not in fault may name the number that shall be played for that die.

6. If a die, even when at rest, is touched before the caster has called his throw, and the throw is disputed, the player not in fault may name the number that shall be played for that die.

7. The caster must abide by his call if the dice are subsequently touched.

PLAYING.

8. If the caster touches one of his own men he must play it, unless, prior to touching it, he intimates his intention of adjusting it. If an adverse man, or a man that cannot be played is touched, there is no penalty.

9. A man is not played until it is placed on a point and quitted.

10. The caster must play the whole throw if he can; in bearing, if a mar is played, and another man or the same man is then borne from the highest occupied point, the highest number thrown is deemed to be borne.

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* It is a disadvantage to play with too few men.

11. If a wrong number of points is played, the adversary may require the right number to be played, but he must do so before making his next throw.

BEARING.

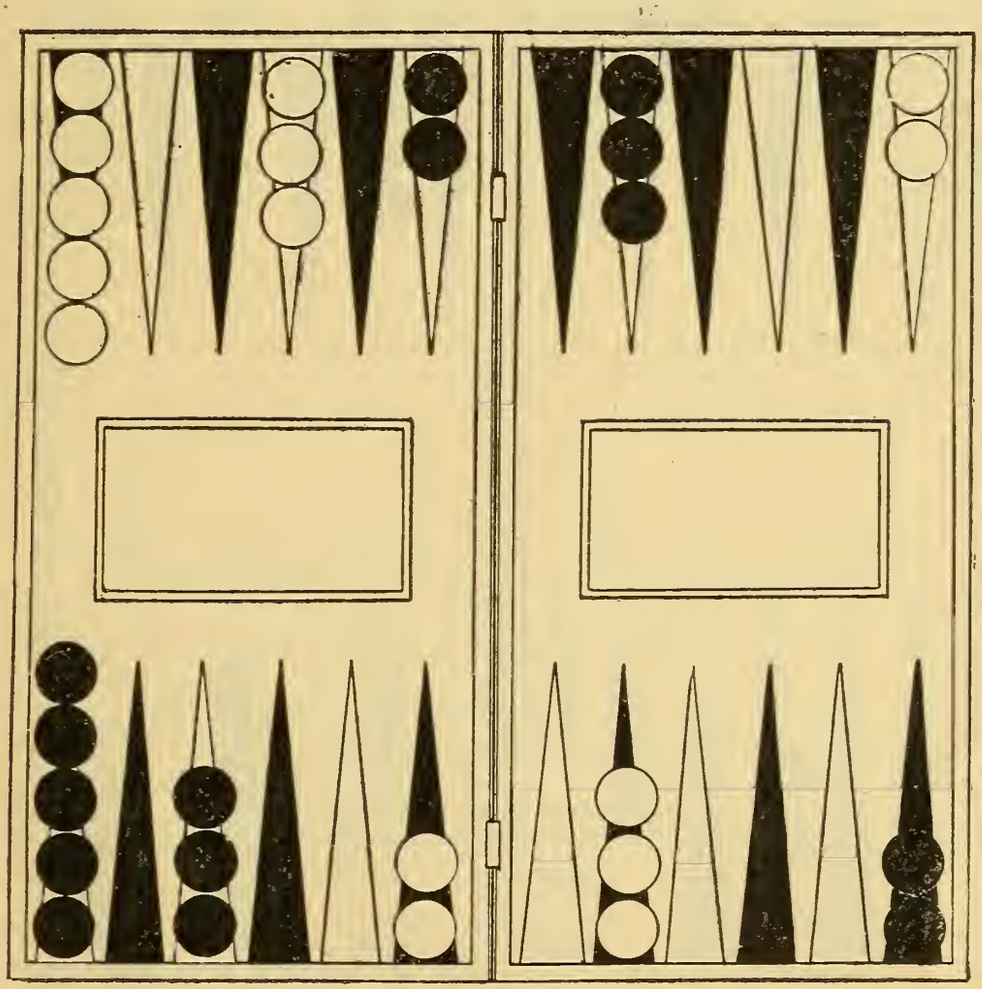
12. If a man is up and others are borne before the one up is entered, the men so borne must be entered again, as well as the man taken up.

PROBLEMS ILLUSTRATING THE GAME.

Taken from Berkeley.

No. I.

BLACK, OR B.



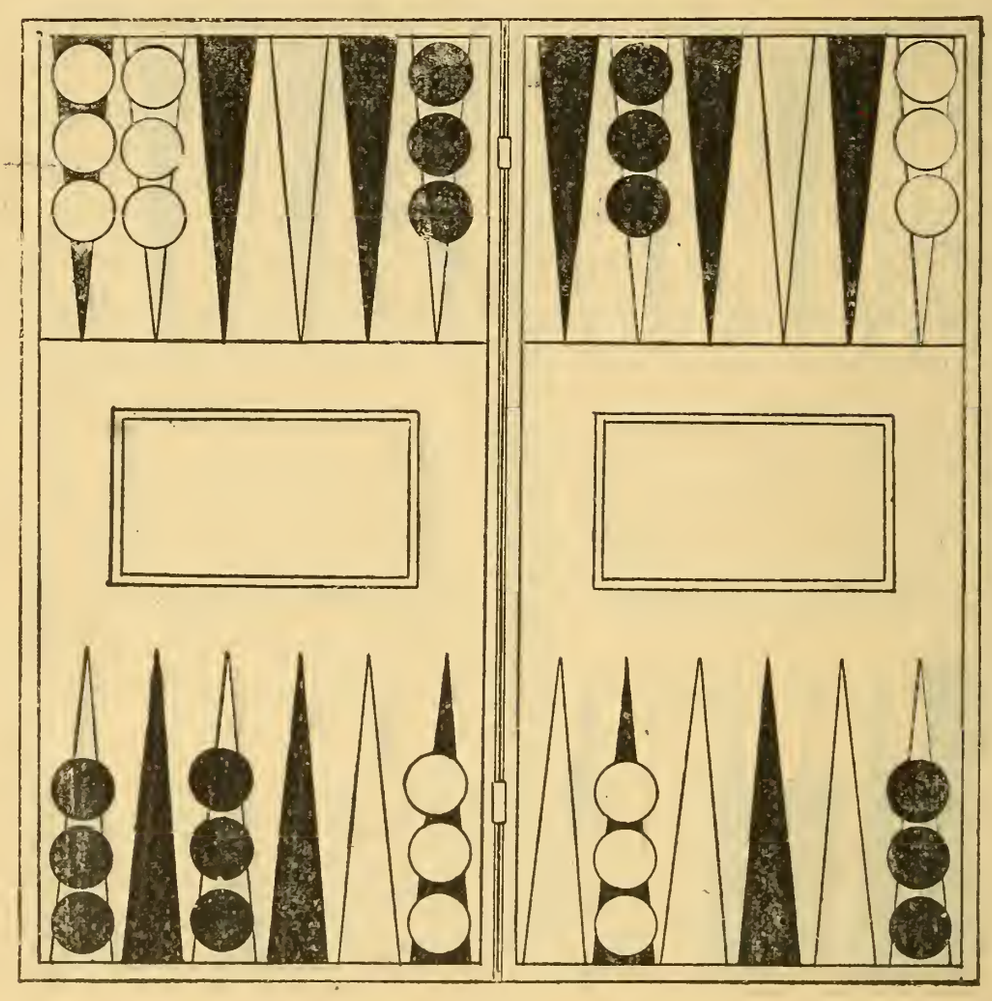
WHITE, OR A.

Suppose the men to be placed as shown in this diagram, who has the better game, A or B?

A has, because he ought to play, if possible, an ace or deuce from B's ace point in order to take possession of B's deuce or trois point, or both, as occasion may offer; and, since he is already in possession of B's quatre point, he may easily bring these men away, if he finds it necessary, and he will also have a resting place by the convenience of that point, which at all times during the game will give him an opportunity of running for the hit or staying to worry B, if he thinks proper, whereas, B cannot so readily come from A's trois point.

No. II.

BLACK, OR A.



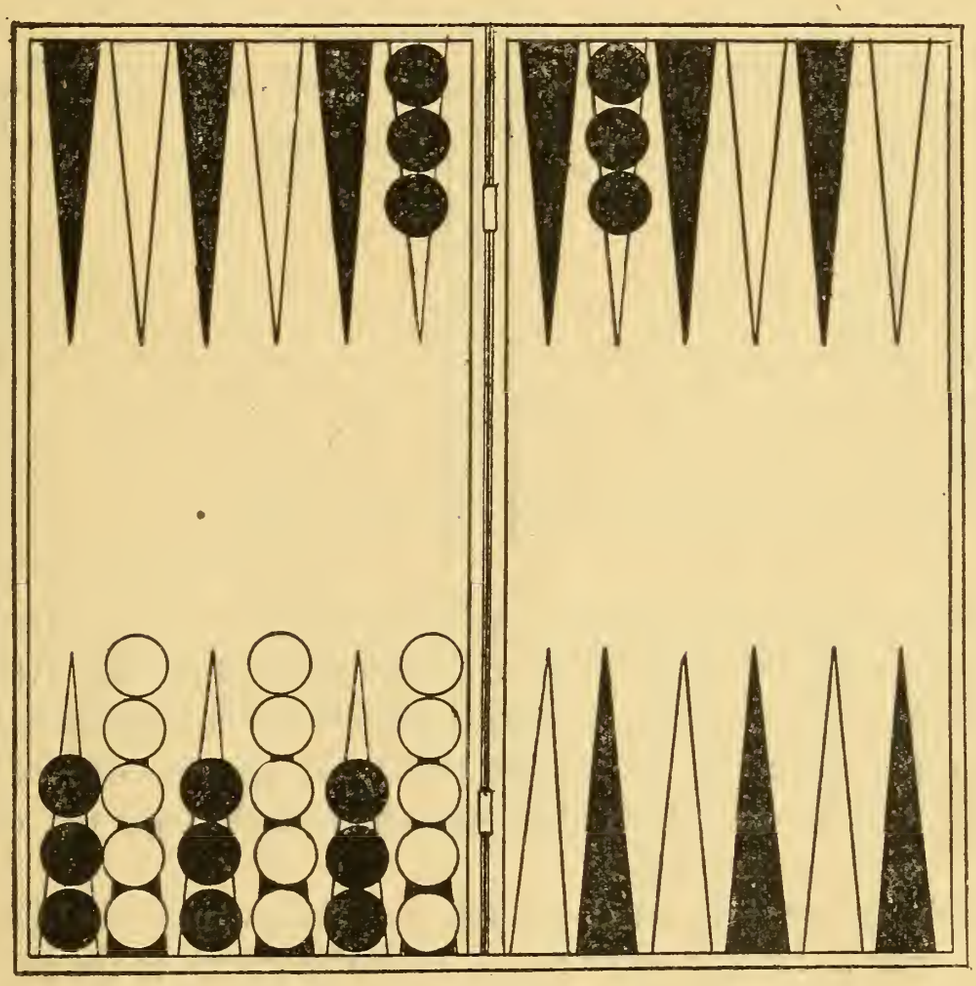
WHITE, OR B.

With the men arranged as in preceding diagram, who has the better game, A or B?

A ; because the ace and trois points in the adversary's table are not so good as the ace and deuce points, because when bearing his men, the deuce point often saves him from making a blot, which is almost certain to happen if the opponent (B) has possession of A's ace and deuce points. A should further endeavor to be hit as often as possible, to keep his game backward, and for the same reason should refrain from hitting any blots B makes.

No. III.

BLACK, OR A.



WHITE, OR B.

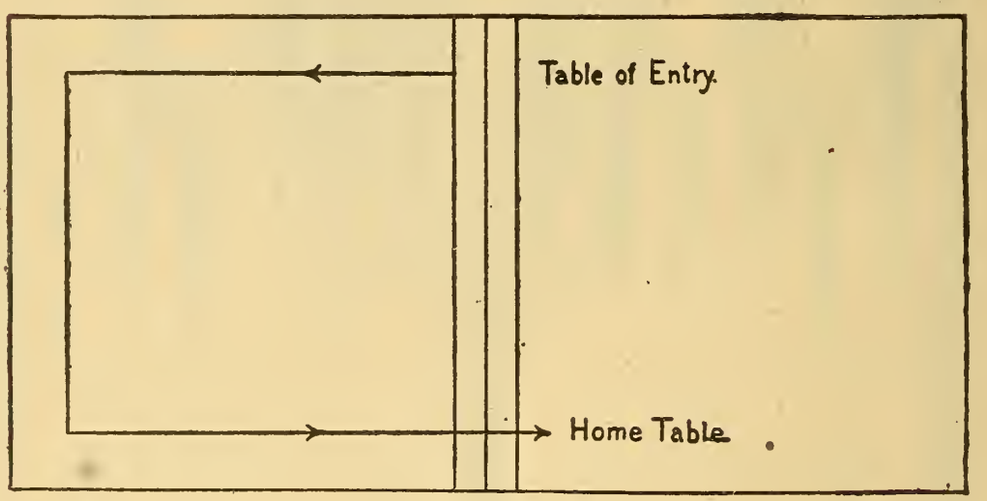
Who has the better of the Hit, with the men in position shown in above diagram?

It is anybody's game; but the difficulty lies with B, who in the first place should endeavor to gain his cinque and quarter points, and when that is effected, he should play two men from A's cinque point, in order to oblige A to leave a blot, if he should throw an ace. Should B be successful in capturing one of A's men he will have the better of the Hit.

RUSSIAN BACKGAMMON.

This variety of the game is played with the same implements as English Backgammon.

BLACK.



The board is not furnished at starting; but both black and white (or red and black) men are entered in the same table—by throws of dice—and the march of both sets of draughts is in the same direction, viz., from any table chosen—one of the minor tables—on which they are entered, through the other tables to the home table.

If the upper right hand—which in this instance would seem to answer to black's outer table—then the march of the men is as shown on diagram. Again, should the table marked Home be chosen, then naturally the march will be in the opposite direction.

A player is not obliged to enter all his men before he plays

any, and he may take up blots, even if some of his men have not been entered.

Should a player be taken up, he is obliged to enter the captured "man" before playing any other already entered.

A player who throws doublets is not only entitled to, but bound to use (or "play") the doublets thrown, and also the complimentary ones, *i. e.*, the corresponding doublets on opposite faces of the dice. Example: He throws sixes, therefore must first play four sixes and then four aces, and in addition he has another throw.

This privilege given to doublets is not, however, allowed to either player when he throws his first set of doublets in the game.

No player is permitted to play the "complimentary" doublets until he has completely used the doublets thrown, and, furthermore, he has no right to another throw until he has played both sets of doublets—*i. e.*, those thrown and the corresponding ones.

The privilege is given of allowing the caster of a deuce, ace, to choose any doublets he likes on opposite faces of the dice, and to throw again. The restriction with regard to first doublets does not apply to deuce, ace, and this throw does not count as doublets; hence does not remove the restriction regarding first doublets.

Sometimes, if a player cannot complete his throw, or any part of it (whether doublets or not), it is agreed that the opponent shall play the remainder of it with his own men, moving only one at a time. If, however, in so doing the opponent leaves a blot which opens a point on which the first player (or caster) can play, this latter comes in and continues his play by taking up a blot.

If then, the first player can complete his throw, and has thrown doublets, or deuce, or ace, he throws again; but, if he cannot complete it, or if the opponent completes, he may not throw again.

If neither of the players can play any part of, or complete a

throw, the remainder of it is lost, and in the case of doublets, deuce or ace, the caster (or first named player) does not throw again. In other respects, the game is similar to ordinary backgammon.

Owing to the rather complicated nature of this arrangement, many players prefer to omit the continuation of play by the opponent as described above, while others again, will not play the game at all, remaining steadfast in their allegiance to the English variety of the pastime.

The chief object of this variation, so popular in Russia, Germany, and on the Continent generally, is, that the player, who has his men in advance, shall hold as many successive points as possible, to prevent the opponent from hitting or passing the forward men.

TURKISH BACKGAMMON.

This variation differs from both the English and Russian game, and is considered by many more interesting than either of the others.

The lead is determined as in the other varieties of Backgammon.

The player who has the lead begins by placing two of his men (or pieces) on what would be the first point in the Russian game, thus the two points in entering count one, until he has fully entered the table. The sixth point extends one beyond, until the player is able to move out the two men first placed, and this cannot be done until all are in.

The player cannot cover a point while entering.

He is not allowed to make a point beyond the twelfth point until that is covered, and none this side (inner table) until he has fully entered all his men. After this he advances much as he would in the Russian variation.

The player who throws doublets can use, not only the doublets thrown, but also the corresponding doublets on the opposite side of the dice. This, however, is not obligatory, as in

the Russian variety, and therefore is not always done, as, prior to beginning of the game, the players agree often to use (count) only the face value of the doublets. This makes the game more equal.

The player, after covering the twelfth point, may come into the opponent's table, pointing there and interrupting his entrance.

After moving out the first two placed in his table, the player goes back to the Russian, counting first point one up to the sixth.

The game will be found very intricate, hence more absorbing, as it proceeds; the player is frequently misled into believing that he has the advantage, when, suddenly, he discovers that he is beaten.

In the foregoing pages, it has been out of the question, of course, to illustrate extensively, either by word or drawings, the ever-varying probabilities of the game, which a thorough study of the subject suggests.

It is hoped, however, that both historically and technically, this condensed treatise has so clearly outlined the various phases of Backgammon, as to be perfectly comprehensible to the student, and that it will, furthermore, prove of sufficiennt interest, to incite him to a more profound investigation of the same.

OPINIONS AND AXIOMS.

"It is only persons of consequence who play at backgammon, and those only who are the most quick witted, ready and watchful can ever thoroughly master it," says an old French writer.

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A Sanskrit riddle, apropos of an ancient form of backgammon: "In a house where there were many, there is left but one, and where there was none, and many came, at last, there was none. Thus Kala and Kali, casting day and night on a pair of dice, play with human pieces on the board of the world."

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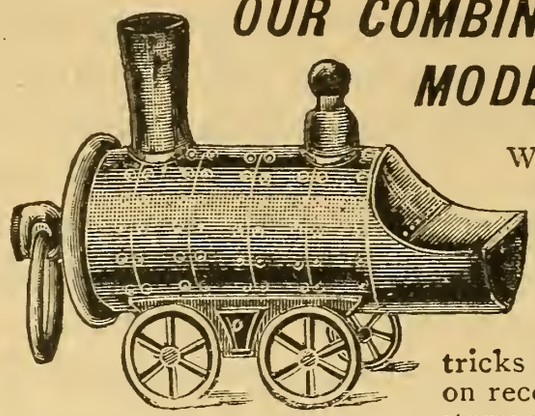

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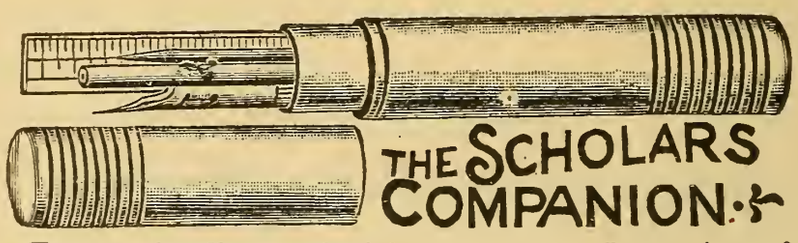

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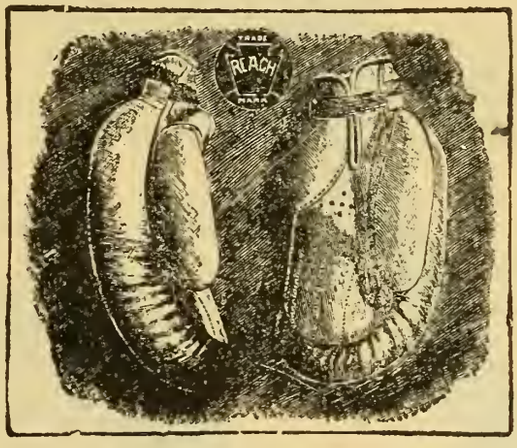

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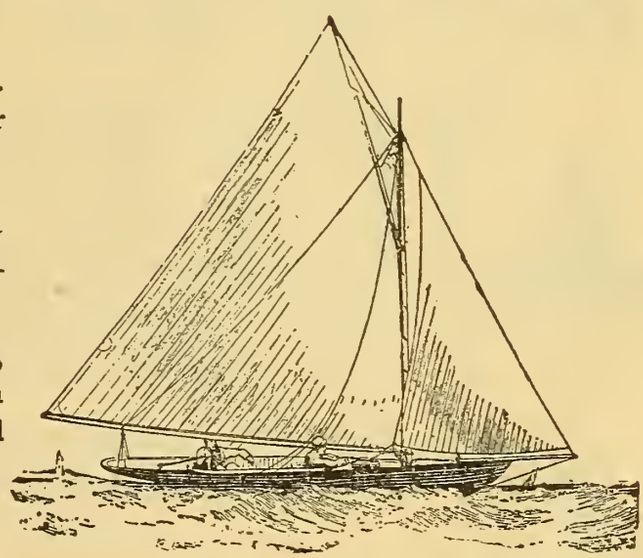

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